



Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter

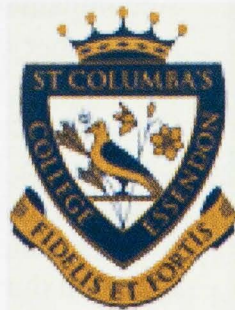
- Partners in Mission

Vol. 4 No. 3 September 2003

Success Stories - *an inspiration to all*

Congratulations to the **students from St Columba's College Essendon** who recently won the State premier division of the Rock Eisteddfod with their performance of Cabaret Australia. The students combined talents in dance with their commitment to social justice to highlight the refugee issue. The production was very much a team effort, utilising the skills and expertise of many of the wider College community.

Lizzie Ingleson, a Year 8 student at St Vincent's College has just been named 'New South Wales Young Historian of the Year'. This was the result of Lizzie's entry "Refugees: 1976-2001 - Are We Going Backwards" in the Year 7-8 category of the National History Challenge. The judges were very impressed with her level of research, her historical enquiry and written presentation.



Hannah Mahy receiving her award from Archbishop Pell

Hannah Mahy, a Year 12 student also from St Vincent's received the Archbishop of Sydney Award for Student Excellence. Her citation reads in part: "Hannah's love for people, especially disadvantaged children has inspired us to better understand poverty, and to be courageous and generous in removing injustice".

Well done girls!



Father Laurie Christie and Sister Jacinta Fong unveiling the plaque

Tribute to the man in the bus shelter:

His actions speak louder than his words.

Karl Kulper was a homeless man who called a bus shelter outside St Vincent's Hospital Darlinghurst 'home' for 25 years. Despite efforts to find him a flat, he refused to leave the bus shelter. No one knows why he chose to live in a bus shelter. Not much is known about him as he said little. Karl aged 66 died last September and recently the Sisters, the staff of the hospital and Darlinghurst locals gathered at the bus shelter to bless and unveil a plaque honouring the life and memory of Karl.

The plaque is fixed over his ashes, which have been built into the wall of the bus shelter. Karl had touched many with his gentleness and kindness. The nurses speak with great respect and affection of the way he would take care of them, escorting them from the hospital after a late shift and seeing that they boarded their buses safely. He would also keep an eye on young children, left at the bus stop to catch their school buses.

GOLDEN JUBILARIANS



Sister Josephine Hodges



Sister Elizabeth Dodds, Sister Lorna Moylan



Sister Patricia Coyle

Our congratulations ...to the four sisters who celebrated their Golden Jubilee of Profession on 4th August, **Sisters Patricia Coyle, Margaret Costigan, Lorna Moylan and Josephine Hodges.** The occasion was marked with celebrations in the three eastern states- Patricia celebrated in Brisbane, Josephine in Sydney, and Lorna in Melbourne. Margaret chose not to have a public celebration. On each occasion, in the prayers of intercession, Sister Margaret Lee, a member of the group, who died suddenly three years ago, was mentioned, as was Ruth Whitely.

Sister Josephine Hodges

celebrations were held at Liverpool on Saturday 2nd August.

The Community of St Mary's, supported by the Medley Avenue and Cabramatta Communities, made the preparations for the celebrations in All Saints Church and Loreto Place- formerly St Mary's Convent.

Accompanied by her fellow Jubilarians, Josephine, an ex-pupil, parishioner of All Saints, walked down the aisle humbly yet proudly. Father Phil Linder PP celebrated the Mass. Sister Elizabeth Dodds, Congregational Leader, welcomed all and set the scene for this Eucharistic Thanksgiving for the fifty years of Profession as a Sister of Charity. Many participated in the Mass, Sisters, family and friends. Sister Eleanor and the Caritas Singers provided the singing and on one occasion during the Mass sang a Blessing for Josephine. At the end of Mass, traditionally the Congregational Leader would present the Jubilarian with the Papal Blessing, but not this time. Instead Sr Elizabeth asked Sister Anne Louise, a good friend, to present the Blessing to Josephine. We were all touched by this gesture.

After Mass all the family gathered with the Sisters and friends at Loreto Place. Following the welcome and speeches Josephine cut the cake. The cake was set on a cloth embroidered by her father.

The day was a very joyful occasion for Josephine and an inspiration for us all. Surrounded by family and friends Josephine was radiant.

Later, asked to give her reflection on the day, Josephine wrote: "Sisters ask me if I'm down from cloud nine yet and my reply is that I'm not sure what 'cloud nine' is, because truthfully, I don't know where I am or what I'm on- I'm just somewhere I've never been before and I'm experiencing a deep change within. For all of this I give thanks to God who graced me in this fallow year of Jubilee.

We each have our own journey behind us. I'm truly grateful to have reached this point and who knows where Love may lead?"

Sister Lorna Moylan

marked the occasion with a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Day Centre at Caritas Christi, Kew celebrated by her close friend, Father Tiernan Doherty on Sunday 3rd August. A large number of Lorna's extended family joined the Sisters and her friends in celebrating her 50 years of commitment.

Sister Patricia Grantham welcomed the guests prior to the beginning of the Liturgy, especially her sister Helen and brother-in-law Bede Gilmore

Golden Jubilarian (cont'd)

Father, in his homily, spoke of the meaning of religious commitment and of Lorna's generous response to that calling. At the conclusion of the Mass, Sister Elizabeth Dodds presented Lorna with the Papal Blessing.

There was much hilarity, while enjoying the refreshments that followed, as guests recalled family happenings.

In proposing the toast, Lorna's sister Helen spoke of the important influence of their parents in their early lives and the unconditional love and support that they showed them.

Helen also recalled how Lorna regularly received the Religion prize at school and as a result their bedroom was like a shrine – even to the statue that glowed in the dark. She also told of Lorna's wagging school with her classmate Margaret Scully and being found at the local station at lunchtime. Two unlikely escapees!! Helen also referred to the great determination, in overcoming difficulties that Lorna has shown and finally that no one could wish for a better sister.

Sister Patricia Coyle

celebrated her Golden Jubilee on a beautiful sunny afternoon, 10th August.

Over one hundred Sisters, family and friends gathered at the Giovanni Chapel at Mt Olivet for the celebration of the Eucharist by Father Brian Burke, Chaplain of Mt Olivet. The Mt St Michael's College students' choral and orchestral group provided magnificent music and singing. MSM is Patricia's alma mater.

The Congregational Leader, Sister Elizabeth Dodds, welcomed the Sisters from interstate and Queensland communities, family and friends. She spoke of Patricia's faithfulness, her vision, her past and present ministries and the real meaning of a Jubilee.

After Communion Father Burke called Patricia forth for a special blessing after which Patricia spoke of her gratitude to so many who have been part of her journey to this day. Firstly her parents, her sister Carmel, Sisters in her early religious life along with many others who have enabled her to continue to reach this special day. Patricia ended with a quote from a card she had received during the week:

Life is an adventure Risk it.

Life is a challenge Face it.

Life is a hymn Sing it.

After the Eucharistic celebration a most enjoyable afternoon tea was served in the Board Room, meticulously prepared by Kathy Dean and her kitchen staff, and where such a happy atmosphere prevailed.

It was good to have the opportunity to meet Patricia's co-workers from Holy Spirit Northside and 'Friends of Mt Olivet'.

It was a Grand Celebration.

Sister Mary Elspeth Smith

**born to eternal Life -
7th July 2003**



Sister Elspeth born Anne Catherine on 2nd April 1917, known as Elsie to her religious family and Aunty Nancy to the Smith family, died on 7th July 2003 at St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne after a fall in her room at Caritas Christi Hostel. She had lived at Caritas since 1994, after retiring from Pastoral Visitation in the Essendon area.

Sr Elspeth enjoyed her days in the classroom both in NSW and Victoria where she taught primary students. She was always pleased to meet her ex-students at functions and celebrations over the past years and enjoyed being able to say 'I taught her (or him) at St Theresa's or St Columba's. Many sisters remembered Elspeth in the classroom with affection and realize that she taught them well.

Elspeth did not always enjoy good health, but in the weeks before she died was well, happy and enjoyed outings with carers and volunteers. Those of us who lived with Elspeth or visited her in recent weeks are left with this memory of her. Sisters Patricia Walker and Patricia Grantham sat with her as she waited to go to surgery- not a word of complaint about the pain, the delay in surgery or her current situation, to the contrary Elspeth chattered to the point that they had to leave her so that she would rest. These Sisters considered it a privilege to be with her. Unfortunately her general well-being was unable to handle the trauma of the fall and the surgery.

Elspeth was buried from Sacred Heart Church, Kew on 11th July where Father M Crawford celebrated the Funeral Mass. Father Crawford knew Elspeth when she was at St Columba's and he often visited her at the hostel so was able to speak of her faithfulness to her prayer and the Eucharist. He spoke of her enjoying her eternal reward, going to the Father to whom she prayed so often. We believe Elspeth is enjoying her reward for her sixty-seven years of faithful service to the Lord.

The Smith family were well represented at the Vigil on the 10th at the Hostel, participated in the Liturgy of the Eucharist and were at the wake thereafter at the Hostel.

May Elspeth rest in peace.

Sister Mary Ryan

born to eternal Life - 19th July 2003

Mary's sister, Sister Sarah Ryan pays tribute to her.

If anyone leaves father or mother for my sake, he will receive a hundredfold even in this life and in the age to come they will receive eternal life.

(Mark 16:29)

On the evening of Saturday 19th July Sister Mary slipped gently into her mansion of perfect peace and happiness-eternal life. However, it is not difficult to believe that her last days on earth were evidence of her receiving the hundredfold in this life.

Sister Patricia Grantham and her able assistants from Caritas Christi were meticulous to ensure that everything was fitting for a Sister of Charity. Mrs Elizabeth Reid from Caritas was with me when Mary died. No one could have demonstrated more love and concern than the staff at Cambridge House in caring for Mary.

Elizabeth Reid pinned her Orange Blossom Bouquet on her and I had the privilege to place her crucifix around her neck and her vows in her hands. Patricia Grantham and the Sisters from 23 Brunswick Street joined us at the time.

On 22nd July, Mary's Feastday, the Vigil Service was held at Caritas. It was beautifully and prayerfully prepared by Sister Regina Millard and attended by a large number of Sisters. The tributes to Mary that were shared by the Sisters were inspirational to me.

The Requiem Mass was celebrated the following morning at Sacred Heart Church, Kew by the Parish Priest Father Malcolm Crawford. Lynne from Caritas printed the Mass booklet and Sister Angela Burke ably assisted the organist. It was a source of great joy to the two boys and myself to see Angela, who without warning, was requested to lead the singing and supervise the music.

She did this so prayerfully that the Mass was a memorable one. Angela had performed this same role at our sister, Madeleine's Mass. The presence of so many Sisters at the Mass was very heartening.

I felt most of Mary's friends and associates would agree with me when I chose, in the eulogy, two words to describe Mary – 'Special' and 'Simplicity'.

Her Sister friends and former colleagues could witness to her being 'special'. I believe that she must have been special to God who gave her ten years of happiness and wonderful care in her retirement at Caritas and directed her to Cambridge House for the last months of her life where she was again the recipient of loving care and attention. At Cambridge House the Sisters from 21 Brunswick Street ensured that her spiritual needs were more than adequately met.

Mary had a simple but deep faith, a simple but sometimes profound prayer life. She had great devotion to the Memorare, believing that anything could be gained by going to Mary, the Mother of God. Similarly her pastimes and enjoyments were very simple, she loved playing scrabble, listening to the races and the football. I concluded the Eulogy with one of her simple sayings:

Step by step

Prayer by prayer

God will always get you there.

He did- Mary is now with her God and He with her.

K.I.T. - September 2003 ..4



Sister Mary Ryan

Following the wonderful Eucharistic celebration of Mary's life, despite heavy rain, a great number of Sisters made their way to Melbourne General Cemetery for the final committal prayers. All were then invited to share refreshments at Caritas Christi Kew.

It would be impossible to see the spirit of Mary Aikenhead more alive and in evidence anywhere than through the Sisters, the Carers and the Staff at Caritas Christi Hostel.

As a follow up, Mary's long and fruitful life was remembered in the celebration of Masses for her on 30th July at Mount Olivet, Cambridge House and in Fiji. Gathering for these Masses were her friends and former colleagues who shared stories of Mary's devotion and commitment as a very compassionate nurse and Sister of Charity.

Finally a special Mass was celebrated by Father Hugh Walsh, OFM at Waverley for family members, especially those who were unable to go to Melbourne and was followed by refreshments in the Friary.

15th August-Feast of the Assumption Congregational Feastday



Sister Jeanie Johnston's talents were evident in the liturgy she prepared for use by all communities on our Congregational Feast. Communities were encouraged to gather together for the occasion but where this was not possible, the feast was celebrated in individual communities.

In Victoria, on the Thursday evening preceding the Feast all those Sisters who were able gathered for a great night together at Moonee Valley.

In New South Wales, a large contingent of Sisters arrived at the Jack Lang Hall at Auburn on Saturday morning 16th August. When Jeannie Johnston's extraordinary talents and flair for Liturgy are combined with the ingenuity of Kerry barras and her helpers, Magic Happens!



The Liturgy led by the 'Mountain Maids' Mary and Colleen, together with Clare, Eileen and Patsy Mary, was a lovely introduction to the morning, which commenced as promised at 10.00am sharp (punctuality always a good omen). Much creativity was in evidence in the way that the focal point and décor for the prayer was arranged and which set the tone. The table decor expertly printed by Melinda added a touch of finesse.



What is a Catholic function without a raffle? Unthinkable! All around the room were a number of items to be raffled and equal number of sisters only too willing to sell as many tickets as possible for goodies of good quality and no doubt donated by generous people.

What an auction! Equalling the skills of the best, Kerry in her inimitable way explained the process to a group not so skilled in the art ... woe to the person who lifted a finger to brush a fly ... the whistle blew and the prize was yours!! And yes ... you had to pay the price!!

However it took a little time to get the 'hang of it'- fingers went up, voices chimed in, and toes were tapping, all hoping to collect the bargain before that dread whistle sounded to close the bidding.

As time closed in on a wonderful fun filled morning the raffles were drawn. It was obvious who had direct lines through prayer to the Patron of raffles. Congratulations to the winners, many of whom were our prayerful residents at the Village (no small coincidence).

The counting of the cash was in full swing and to the delight of all, cash that flowed via the raffles, the auction, a last minute "throw a bit more in the hat" at Carol's initiative and a generous donation from Liz, realized a total of \$2,000.00 which was later forwarded to St Vincent de Paul to be distributed to our drought stricken brothers and sisters in the west. And ... the morning concluded at 12 noon sharp. **Well-done Sisters! Do it again.**

PS: Kerry received a letter of gratitude from the St Vincent de Paul in Warren, along with a certificate of appreciation.

*Aileen Thomas wrote the following tribute to Mary, which,
was read by Margaret Beirne at the Requiem.*

My Tribute and farewell to My Dear Friend

Twenty-six years ago Mary and I were moved to Concord. It was a very big move for Mary as she had been in Melbourne for about twenty-five years. Sydney had changed so much and she was lost and one day she asked me the way to the station so I went with her. We were up the top of Burwood when she had an angina turn. We had no car and very little money on us and somehow I got her home by bus. After that I went with her for safety. Thus began the most wonderful of friendships.

Mary was a very gentle person but most of all she was a woman of courage. No one else knows how she suffered with a heart condition that lasted over 30 years. Many nights I sat on the end of her bed waiting to call an ambulance, but the attack would pass and she would say: 'Don't say anything' and get up and go to school the next day. The first of three heart attacks came in 1979. On the long weekend in June 1990 I visited Mary at Cabramatta and she jokingly said, 'I'll have a by-pass and go around Australia with you.' Within a week she had her third heart attack, which resulted in four by-passes. How she fought to gain her strength and in 1995 we did go around Australia and we had a wonderful time. Memories I will treasure forever.

She was also to suffer three small strokes- twice collapsing in my arms; but she always fought back. In recent years she could only walk a few yards and was in constant pain but I hardly ever heard her complain.

We had wonderful holidays together. I would like to share one experience. We were in a shop in Mt Gambier and I bought a little plaque entitled 'True Friend'. Before we left Mary was looking for something and finally said she wanted to buy something but couldn't find it. When I gave it to her that night she told me she had wanted to buy it for me; apparently there was only one. 'Mary I have it now and will treasure it always'. Mary asked three weeks ago what I was doing for the school holidays and said how she would love to go away for a few days. We had three days at Newcastle and she enjoyed it greatly. I thank God I could give her one last holiday.

My dearest Mary I now say good-bye. I once promised you I would look after you as long as I could, and over the last few days my fellow Sisters have assured me I did. And you were just so grateful. Surely gratitude was perhaps your greatest quality. I promised you I would do all I possibly could so you wouldn't have to go to a nursing home. After all you weren't old: you had just had more birthdays than many of us. I thank God for taking you home before you suffered any more. As I said to you on Saturday night: you were going on this last trip but I wasn't coming. I'm sure the bus wasn't late, you had a really good seat, and it is the best motel we had ever seen- Ten Star Plus. Mary you were only a tiny figure but you will leave a huge gap in my life: but with God's grace and a spark of your courage I will continue as I know you would want. Yesterday I received this poem which really sums up your journey home to your God.

God's Garden

God looked around His garden
And found an empty space.

He then looked down upon the earth
And saw your tired face.
He put His arm around you
And lifted you to rest.

God's garden must be beautiful
He always takes the best.

He knew that you were suffering
He knew you were in pain

He knew that you would never
Get well on earth again

He saw the road was getting rough
And the hills were hard to climb
So he closed your weary eyelids
And whispered: "Peace be thine".

It broke our hearts to lose you
But you didn't go alone.
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.



Sister Mary Garske

Sister Mary Garske

born to eternal Life - 9th August 2003

Mary's sister Marj, her nieces and nephews and her friends from Cabramatta and Ashfield joined a large number of Sisters to farewell her at a Requiem Mass celebrated by the Parish Priest of Cabramatta Father Dan McAuliffe at St Vincent's Ashfield on Wednesday 13th August. The students from Bethlehem College came to the Mass and then formed a Guard of Honour outside the Church as the funeral procession moved off.

At the beginning of Mass, Sister Jan O'Grady delivered a Eulogy, most of which follows:

"Today we gather to pay tribute to a beautiful woman whose warm welcome to all she met endeared her to each one. Her gentle, loving presence is one we miss very much",

Mary was born in Barraba on 19th October 1917 and was the eldest of three children of Charles and Margaret Garske. When her mother died when she was six, an aunt offered to raise the three young children and care for their father, who by then were living in Sydney. Mary attended school at Lewisham, where she met the Sisters of Charity.

When Mary first indicated she wanted to enter the Sisters of Charity her aunt was reluctant, believing she was too young. Her aunt finally agreed and at 18, Mary joined the Congregation in 1935. Following her profession, Mary began her teaching career and soon established herself as an excellent Infants' teacher, and was sent to Melbourne to complete both first and second ITC- the highest qualification possible at the time for an infants' teacher. Over the course of many years Mary prepared in excess of 2000 children for their First Holy Communion. In the post-War years she often taught classes of 70 children, and lucky if 20 could speak English. After her first heart attack in 1979, her full time teaching days were over but she maintained her interest in and education of the young first as a remedial teacher and later as a library assistant at Cabramatta for ten years, delighting many youngsters with her story-telling skills. Here also she endeared herself to children, staff, parents and priests.

Mary's quick sense of humour was exemplified in a story about a shopping expedition with Aileen told by Jan. When being encouraged to purchase a wig she had tried on, as quick as a flash Mary said, "Oh, I will have to ask my husband about it".

From Cabramatta, Mary went to live at Ashfield where she assisted in the Book Hire room, initially three mornings a week and then one morning as her health deteriorated. Here too Mary endeared herself to staff and students alike.

Although she had lived for many years, Jan said, 'her (Mary's) final illness was not one to prepare us for her leaving. When word came on the Saturday evening to say that Mary was being moved to intensive care, after contacting Mary's niece, Catherine, Aileen and Jan went straight in to St Vincent's where they were joined by Sister Laureen. Towards the end, Laureen prayed, thanking God for the gift of Mary to us through a life of love and fidelity. Aileen also spoke of their friendship and told Mary it was now time to go on the greatest trip of her life. Mary appeared to relax and then quietly stopped breathing. Jan paid tribute to the medical and nursing staff for their wonderful attention to Mary and for their care of herself and Aileen on the Saturday evening.

Brother Kelvin Canavan FMS, Executive Director of Schools in a letter of sympathy to Sister Elizabeth and the Congregation, on the death of Mary wrote:

I remember her excitement on that evening in October when her 50 years of service was recognised and acknowledged at the 1991 Archdiocesan Long Service Award Ceremony. ... I would like to express my appreciation for the years of dedicated service Sr Mary gave to the six or more schools in Sydney in which she worked. I am sure that innumerable pupils benefited from her long teaching career ... She truly has seen, and participated in, the development of Catholic education in this country.

Our congratulations.....to our three Diamond Jubilarians, Sisters Rene Duffy and Jean Weatherly who celebrated 70 years of Religious Profession and Sister Teresa Kenny who celebrated 60 years as a Professed Sister of Charity.

Sisters Jean Weatherley and Teresa Kenny

While it was not exactly “knees up Mother Brown”, both Sisters Jean Weatherley and Teresa Kenny were seen dancing at the reception following their Jubilee Mass in the Giovanni Chapel at Mt Olivet on Saturday 23rd August.

Father Brian Burke, Chaplain for Mt Olivet Community Services, was the Celebrant of the Mass of Thanksgiving, which recorded seventy years of Religious Profession for Sister Jean and sixty for Sister Teresa. His homily for the occasion highlighted the importance of commitment and covenant.

A joyous group of family, friends and Sisters joined the Jubilarians who were praised for their fidelity in a moving address of welcome by Sister Elizabeth Dodds, Congregational Leader. The community at Mt Olivet were delighted to welcome Sisters from Ashgrove, Toowoomba and Robina and Sister Claire Nolan, Congregational Councillor, as well as other Queensland Sisters and some who were holidaying from the south. Sister Leone Wittmack presented a Papal Blessing to Jean, pointing out their similar origins (from good Darling Downs stock); Sister Claire Nolan presented one to Sister Teresa.

A Brisbane group known to many of our Sisters – the Brothers James Singers – led the singing during the Mass and gave lively renditions of some older favourite songs at the reception. “Bye, bye blackbird” seemed the stimulus that got Jean and Teresa up to dance. This added to the delight of all present, who sincerely praised Jean and Teresa for their impressive record and wished them well for the coming days.

Sister Rene Duffy

celebrated her seventy years of Religious Profession quietly on the day itself, 21st August with a Mass at Caritas Christi, Kew. Sister Patricia Grantham picked up Rene from the St George Private Hospital where she was a patient, and took her back to Caritas Christi for a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by a luncheon with the community. Rene’s nieces also attended the celebrations. At a later date, when the Congregational Leader is able to be present, it is planned to have another small celebration.

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS



L-R: Sister Teresa Kenny, Sister Elizabeth Dodds and Sister Jean Weatherley



FROM THE EDITOR

In this edition of KIT we record celebrations, achievements and final farewells to three of our sisters.

Traditionally, January and August are months of celebrations within the Congregation. For the most part Religious Profession ceremonies were held each year in those two months. Last month we rejoiced with Sisters celebrating 50, 60 and 70 years of Religious Profession. In congratulating them I also thank them for their example to us for their commitment, dedication and self-giving in a time in society when life long commitment is not the norm.

It is wonderful to see the students in our Colleges being concerned about issues of social justice and being proactive in assisting those affected by unjust structures. It makes me proud to be associated with such young women and those who guide them.

To those who have contributed stories, photos or passed on stories for KIT thank you very much. I am also indebted for assistance I have received in its production and editing. I look forward to receiving your articles/stories for the December edition.

May the Lord carry you gently through each day.

Naama Wheeler ABC

PROJECT DREAMING TRACKS

At the end of 2001 the Sisters of Charity Aboriginal Awareness Project (the AAP) finished. It had run its course. That it was a Sisters of Charity and not an Aboriginal agency had always been clearly stated. In the early and developing years this was not considered a problem particularly because at all times the AAP followed initiatives, advice and encouragement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It was always run on a policy of consultation with community development lines involving staff and committees.

With growing awareness in the Aboriginal and wider community, particularly around the time of Corroboree 2000 and the Bridge Walk, it was clear that the management by the Trustees of the Sisters of Charity as an organisation was inappropriate and would have to cease.

In 1993 the AAP office was set up at Strathmore. In 1997 some programs transferred to the Minajalku Centre in Thornbury where our initial task was to set up an indigenous garden. The Minajalku Aboriginal Corporation Committee gave us an additional brief 'to bring the centre to life'.

As Minajalku's profile was raised there seemed to be confusion among some in the wider community that the AAP and Minajalku were one and the same thing. We were directed by the Minajalku Committee to manage the Minajalku Centre and in the process we developed programs for involving the Aboriginal community. Over the years we were there we did this in so many things that it would be hard to catalogue them. Of course many activities were a 'combining' of AAP and Minajalku.

Some examples were the creation of the beautiful indigenous garden at Minajalku, which won much praise from visitors. There were reconciliation events, art and theatre programs, budget lunches in our healthy eating program, creating vegetable gardens in an outreach program for Aboriginal people and many other successful projects.

However, it was never intended that we 'take over' Minajalku or remain there permanently, and the far reaching object was that, when they were ready, Aboriginal people through the Minajalku Committee would themselves take over the buildings, the grounds, and the day to day running of programs they wanted. This happened at the beginning of 2002. Our trails separated but our connection and friendship remains unbroken in so many other ways.

A new vision, and a new name 'Project Dreaming Tracks', grew out of the strong expectation of members of the Indigenous community that what the AAP had been doing for people should not be lost. This is how the new agency, **PROJECT DREAMING TRACKS INC A Cross Cultural Outreach Project** was born.

This is a new project and the concept has been expanded to include non Aboriginal as well as Aboriginal people in our outreach program hence our title is 'Project Dreaming Tracks - A Cross-Cultural Outreach Project' (to include all in need). This reflects the reality of the growing partnership and included the concern of indigenous people from other dislocated and traumatised groups. Lowitja O'Donoghue wrote this year in A Fair Society? Common Wealth for the Common Good: Ten Years On:

But I must add one more issue of crucial interest to me and thousands of other citizens of Australia - as well as being central to the issue of wealth sharing. That is the matter of how to treat asylum seekers with respect, dignity and compassion. As a descendent of this country's first inhabitants, I welcome these latest newcomers. I believe it is imperative that we have a just and generous refugee program. We have the capacity to do so much more than we do and we certainly have the capacity for a much greater generosity of spirit.

The project has strong Aboriginal leadership and strong collaborative partnership with other cultures involved. Although we certainly did not refuse white people in need during our time at Minajalku, Aboriginal individuals and families were very strongly focused on. Our workers include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, the majority being Aboriginal.

So the office at Strathmore is now the office of Project Dreaming Tracks, an independent incorporated association. The partnership with the Sisters of Charity continues and Margaret Costigan is working with the group as manager and assisting others to develop leadership and management skills.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie Whitaker

Chairperson

Project Dreaming Tracks Inc

Koori Kids Kulture Art Exhibition

A Project of Project Dreaming Tracks Inc

In 2001 several Indigenous students from Northland Secondary College in Melbourne worked with story teller Carolyn Briggs and artists Craig Harris and Maree Clarke to create a series of stunning art works representing the 'before' of Melbourne ... traditional places of indigenous culture and worship, and the 'now', what stands on those grounds these days.

The young participants followed the trail with the storyteller retelling the story in another way thus reflecting what was there before. These stories were the basis for the creative artistic depiction.



At its first showing in 2001 during the Fringe Festival, the exhibition received great praise, and this year as a 'Reconciliation Week' event, the art work was displayed again in St. Francis Pastoral Centre in Melbourne to similar acclaim ... 'stunning', 'outstanding', 'brilliant' and 'deadly' were some of the remarks written in the visitors book. Since then it has been on the move to hospitals and schools and the response was enthusiastic.

For example, a teacher from one secondary school wrote:

The Koori Kids Kulture Exhibition was wonderful. Our students benefited from it and found the colours, themes and materials used very interesting. It has been incorporated into our Art Classes, Religion Classes and our Year 9 Program. Keep up the wonderful work.

We would like to take the opportunity for more schools and students and other places to see this 'travelling exhibition' of wonderful art work by indigenous youth. If you would like it displayed at your college, assembly room, hospital etc. please contact our office.

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PRIVACY NOTICE

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Those receiving this Newsletter have their names on our database. The list is not used for any other purpose and will not be given to another organisation. If anyone would like to have his/her name removed from the list please let me know.

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Keep in Touch (K.I.T.)

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